



City of Tacoma
City Manager

July 8, 2002

Mr. Robert A. Taylor
NOAA
Damage and Restoration Center, Northwest
7600 Sand Point Way Northeast
BIN C15700
Seattle, Washington 98115

Dear Mr. Taylor:


The Natural Resource Trustees, comprised of seven federal and state agencies and Indian tribes, are charged with implementing the resource damage sections of the Federal Superfund law. As such, the Natural Resource Trustees are proposing a restoration philosophy for complying with that law on the Hylebos Waterway.

The City of Tacoma supports the general concept of this philosophy that focuses on the construction of restoration projects to satisfy habitat damage liability, versus a monetary settlement involving lengthy legal proceedings. For your information, the City of Tacoma pursued a similar approach in 1997 when it signed an agreement with the Natural Resource Trustees. Rather than write a check, the City agreed to construct five restoration projects to help reclaim some of the ecological function in Commencement Bay lost by the industrial practices on the surrounding land and its waterways. With the completion of the first two projects, birds and aquatic animals can now take advantage of the new ecological functions that we have provided. However, after we complete our three remaining projects, there will still be a need for additional restored habitat in Commencement Bay.

The opportunity exists for others to undertake additional natural resource restoration work in Commencement Bay. We believe the Natural Resource Trustees' proposal can help achieve this objective. Their proposal focuses money and time on the ecosystem through a project-based approach to restoring the bay, rather than on legal proceedings. The proposal also allows flexibility by encouraging smaller entities to team with larger ones to achieve the desired level of restoration. The City has found its project-based settlement to be the most equitable approach for all concerned.

Tacoma supports the Hylebos proposal as we believe it is in the best interest of the public and environment. Everyone will benefit when Commencement Bay is cleaned and restored. We encourage those with pending natural resource damage liability to take advantage of the opportunity to settle their claims and supplement our efforts to restore Commencement Bay.

Sincerely,



RAY E. CORPUZ, JR.
City Manager

cc: Public Works Department

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